



## Colonel Richard George Butler

May 28, 1930 - February 8, 2026

ADRIAN- Colonel Richard George Butler, age 95 of Adrian, passed away on Sunday, February 8, 2026, at Brookdale Independent Living under the care of Hospice of Lenawee.

Richard was born May 28, 1930, in Tecumseh, Michigan to Elvin and Zelma (Cook) Butler. He was a graduate of Onsted High School, class of 1947. Richard married Rhea Muhn on December 22, 1950, in Tecumseh, Michigan and she survives him. He graduated from Adrian College in 1953 with a Bachelor of Science degree. Richard worked at Tecumseh Products from 1947 until 1959.

Richard proudly served his country when he was drafted into the U.S. Army in July of 1953 where he served in the occupational Army of Germany. Richard received a direct commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Artillery while he served in the Reserves during September of 1956. In December of 1957, he started his teaching career at Sand Creek Community Schools. He graduated from Eastern Michigan University in June of 1960 with a master's in arts degree. During the Cuban Crisis in 1961 he was recalled to active duty as a 1st Lieutenant with the Adrian Reserve Unit, 392 Chemical Corp, serving at Fort McClellan, Alabama. In 1966, he graduated from Antioch College, Ohio, with a master's in science. Richard then graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1967 with a specialist degree in Counseling. He was a licensed

Michigan Counselor. Richard graduated from the Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1972. He completed 35 years in the Army and Reserves and was discharged from the U.S. Army on February 28, 1988, as a Colonel. Richard was a fixture at the Sand Creek Community School for over 35 years as a high school Teacher, Guidance Counselor, and Principal before retiring in June of 1993.

Attending church activities and worship services were an important part of Richard's life. It was at the Tecumseh Friends Church where he was a teacher, youth leader, and Sunday school superintendent. At Adrian First Church of the Nazarene, he was a teacher, served on the church board, Sunday school board, and along with Rhea, co-directors of the Primetimers for over 20 years. Richard was a life member of the Reserve Officers Association, VFW, American Legion, Disabled Veterans and AMVETS. He performed military duty at: Fort Knox, Fort Dix, Fort Eustis, Fort Story, Fort Bliss, Fort Leavenworth, Fort McClellan, Camp McCoy, Fort MacPherson, Fort Gillem and West Point Military Academy. He also attended the Reserve Center in Adrian, Jackson, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Lansing.

Richard and his wife were foster parents to 18 foster children. Surviving is his wife of 75 years, Rhea Lucille; son, Jerry Lee of Adrian; special foster children, Fay (Wayne) Gasho of Ingersoll, Canada; Gloria Trevino of Adrian; foster grandchildren, Melissa Nieto (Travis) Hollstelle of Oregon and Martha Nieto of Wisconsin; foster great grandson, John Nieto of Washington; sisters-in-law, Sharon Clifton of Oklahoma, Louise Muhn of Lake Havasu, Arizona, and Virginia Butler of Onsted. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Donald Butler; sisters-in-law, Priscilla (Joe) Sardo and Shirlene (Herman) Miller and brother-in-law, Richard Muhn.

There will be a memorial service honoring Richard's life on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Adrian First Church of the Nazarene with Pastor Larry

Betz and Pastor Bob Moulding officiating. A gathering will be held one hour prior to the start of the service at church. Inurnment will take place at Lenawee Hills Memorial Park, Adrian.

Memorial contributions may be made to the family for their discretion.

Online condolences and memories may be shared at [www.WagleyFuneralHomes.com](http://www.WagleyFuneralHomes.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Lenawee Hills Memorial Park

1291 Wolf Creek Hwy.  
Adrian, MI 49221

# Previous Events

## Memorial Gathering

APR 18. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Adrian First Church of the Nazarene  
50 Industrial Drive  
Adrian, MI

## Memorial Service

APR 18. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Adrian First Church of the Nazarene  
50 Industrial Drive  
Adrian, MI

# Tribute Wall

BS

“ He was a great man and raised a great son, Jerry. - Pastor and Mrs. Deverick, Oklahoma, Victory Baptist Church of Yukon

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**Brien Deverick Sr.** - April 17 at 10:05 AM

BA

“ Brookdale Adrian purchased the Sweet Liberty for the family of Colonel Richard George Butler.



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**Brookdale Adrian** - April 16 at 01:55 PM

DL

“ I remember Mr Butler as a principle, he was well dressed, professional, strict disciplinarian, stands to reason with his military background. He was well mannered, soft spoken, well thought of and RESPECTED. When I had to see him for disciplinary reasons, it was deserved and his discipline was fair. Prayers for his family and loved ones.

*Dan Laws ( class of 1975 )*

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**Daniel C Laws** - February 21 at 06:55 PM

JH

*When I was a kid, my mom (Sharron M. Muhn) and I lived in Adrian, Mi. My favorite place to go was always Aunt Rhea and Uncle Dicks. After moving away to California with Mom and my new step dad Harold W. Hall, I missed those days at my aunt and uncle's house. But we went back there for my Grandparents 50th wedding anniversary some years later and all the joy came back to me. As I reflect on my childhood, that's one of the greatest moments of my life. All my relatives were there and lots of their friends. I had the most fun being with everyone at that event. And it's the best memory from then. I love you Uncle and Aunt Rhea. I will see you again someday. John L. Hall*

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**John L. Hall** - April 21 at 01:42 PM

CS

“ *As a member of the Sand Creek Class of '66, we had a special relationship with Mr. Butler. Science, of course, but as one of our class advisors. A special person, along with his wife, in our lives.*

*I also got to spend some time with him at the retirement home, where my mother also resided for a while.*

*Rest in peace sir!*

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**Calvin Schuch** - February 11 at 01:39 PM

AS

“ Richard was like family to me. He was always willing to help when needed. He served on resident council at Brookdale as president, helped me start a men's group, and veterans gathering. He planted flowers all over the community and fed birds even by the community dining room so residents could enjoy them. I was happy to arrange his and Rheas 70th wedding anniversary surprise parade because it was during covid many church members held signs as they passed by! They were both celebrated in local papers and television for their many years of marriage. I will remember you my dear friend every time I feed my birds or plant flowers you will be remembered but mainly for your deep faith in God we shared many stories prayers for you dear Rhea and Jerry



alice stiekes - February 11 at 01:28 PM

GT

“ Richard was mine and my sister's foster parents, and God given grand parents to my daughters Melissa and Martha. I will miss the flowers he bought me on my birthday in May for the past 20 some years. Our Birthday 🎈 is in May. I did tell him it will Not be the same with out the Butler's in my life. 💜 Truly missed ❤️.



Gloria Nieto - Trevino - February 11 at 07:37 AM

DB

“ A true man of God, if anyone was example of Jesus it was Richard. Always a smile , a positive word and of course a joke or a story. Always a strong compassion for others and wanting to help them. He didn't let much slow him down even at being over 90, he was active where he and Rhea lived. He loved his flowers and we enjoyed reading his letters that he sent out talking about their activities, the birds that came around and gardening he did. He will be missed and left a great legacy for all to remember. David Bowles

David Bowles - February 10 at 10:21 PM

PF

“ Mr. Butler was a fair and honest principal. He will be missed. RIP.

Philinda K Fick - February 10 at 08:12 PM

RG

“ Such a great man. He was a special man to all who knew him. Rest now Dick you are home.

Ron and Dawn Gilbert - February 10 at 08:05 PM

PC

“ My sincere and deepest condolences to Richard's family especially his wife Rhea, he was such a wonderful person and a great man of GOD may he RIP ... my prayers for the family



Paula Reyna Chavez - February 10 at 06:51 PM

MS

Richards and his Wife was very kind .lived down on the corner from them .grew up in the church. Sending prayers for the family

Michael Shough - February 11 at 11:27 AM